

of our Declaration of Independence, was looking for examples of democracy around the world, places where the people ruled.

The President gave you a—what I would call a delicate version of the example provided by the Corinthians to Thomas Jefferson. You see, Thomas Jefferson loved the fact that before assuming their titles, the old dukes of Corinthia were ceremoniously slapped by a local present to symbolize the right of the people to rebuff their leaders. Thomas Jefferson liked that. So did all future generations of Americans. [*Laughter*] Except they wait until after you're in office to do it. [*Laughter*]

Well, democracy is going strong again in Slovenia, and still your efforts inspire Americans. We are grateful for the many contributions of Slovenians to the strength and texture of our country, and we are grateful for the partnership that unites us today.

This spring, as both the President and the Prime Minister have said, that partnership met a great test. For the fourth time in this decade, Mr. Milosevic and Serbia launched a brutal campaign of violence, threatening the progress the people of this region have worked so hard to achieve. As you know from the daily television reports, the full horror of that campaign is only now becoming clear.

I would like to thank the President and the Prime Minister for all that you have done to protect democracy and the tolerance it needs to thrive. Now that ethnic cleansing has been defeated in Kosovo, we must build something better in its place throughout Europe, and especially in southeastern Europe.

You know, every leader likes to talk of the future, but today in your Congress Square I saw the future in the faces of the young people who braved the rains to express their support for our shared dreams. I saw those who will lead a free Slovenia into the new millennium.

Your history is enshrined in this magnificent castle we enjoy this evening, but your future is in those young people. And it is in good hands.

So I ask you now to rededicate yourselves to the dreams which brought the people out in the rain today. We owe it to them, to our forebears, and to generations yet unborn.

Please join me in a toast to the President, to the Prime Minister, and the people of this wonderful country.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:40 p.m. in the Dining Hall at Brdo Castle. In his remarks, he referred to Stefka Kucan, wife of President Kucan; and Prime Minister Janez Drnovsek of Slovenia. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks Following Discussions With President Kiro Gligorov of Macedonia in Skopje

June 22, 1999

Thank you very much, Mr. President, Mr. Prime Minister, leaders of the Macedonian Government and political life, parties in Parliament who were freely elected last November.

I thank the President for his statement and would like to reply by saying that I came here for two reasons. First, I want to thank the leaders and the people of Macedonia for helping a just cause to prevail in Kosovo, for giving shelter and hope to the Kosovar refugees, and for welcoming our NATO troops who came here to help those refugees.

NATO could not have achieved its mission without you; the people of Kosovo would not be going home to security and autonomy without you. I came here, as much as anything else, to say thank you.

Second, I came here because I believe the United States, our NATO Allies and, indeed, all nations of the world who support the reversal of ethnic cleansing and respect for human rights and minority rights have a responsibility to help Macedonia to overcome the economic hardships that the recent crisis has imposed and to return to a path to prosperity and even stronger democracy and freedom.

Already, our total aid to Macedonia has more than tripled over last year to \$72 million; and today we will provide another \$12 million in food commodities. In the months ahead, we will do more. But we are also committed to the restoration of economic opportunity and jobs in Macedonia. Today I am delighted that an executive of the American company Liz Claiborne came with the First

Lady here to Macedonia to follow up on her trip and to announce that they would be re-opening facilities and employing somewhere between 2,000 and 3,000 of your people. We will encourage other American businesses now to look at Macedonia as a model of stability at the end of the conflict in Kosovo.

Finally, Mr. President, let me reaffirm once more our belief that in order to build a future of freedom and prosperity, in which human rights and minority rights are everywhere respected, in which nations are not torn apart by yesterday's hatreds and violence, we must make this Stability Pact a success. We must create real opportunities for ordinary citizens throughout southeastern Europe. And the United States is committed to doing that.

But the thing that is even more important, Mr. President, is that the Macedonian people and leaders are committed to that kind of future. I think it is worth noting that this country is not ethnically homogeneous. It has its own challenges. And yet, in spite of that, you were willing to take these refugees—300,000 of them; 50,000 have already gone home. You bore this burden at great cost and considerable risk so that we could together pursue a vision of southeastern Europe very different from what the horrible ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and Kosovo represent.

We have stopped that; now it is time to build that better future. And I pledge to you, sir, that the United States will work with you, and we will do this together.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 1:48 p.m. in the President's Ceremonial Office at the Parliament Building. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Ljubco Georgievski of Macedonia; and Paul R. Charron, chairman and chief executive officer, Liz Claiborne, Inc. The transcript made available by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of President Gligorov.

Remarks to Kosovar Refugees at Stenkovic I Refugee Camp in Skopje *June 22, 1999*

Thank you. Thank you very much. First of all, I would like to thank all the people

who have shared time with my family and me, all these children and their parents. And I would like to say a special word of appreciation to all the workers here who have come from all over the world to help you recover your lives. I thank them very much.

The second thing I would like to say is that I have brought with me a number of people who helped me make sure the United States and NATO did the right thing by the people of Kosovo, and they are also very proud to be here. And I want to thank them, and I hope you will thank them—Mr. Berger and all the other people on our team—because we're proud of what we did because we think it's what America stands for, that no one ever, ever should be punished and discriminated against or killed or uprooted because of their religion or their ethnic heritage. And we are honored to be here with you.

I just want to say a couple of more words before the rain comes down. The first thing is that we are committed not only to making Kosovo safe but to helping people rebuild their lives, rebuild their communities, and then to helping Kosovo and all the countries of the region build a brighter, more prosperous future based on respect for the human rights of all people.

Now, I promised all these wonderful people from all over the world who are here working for you that I would also say this: I know a lot of people are anxious to go home. Many have already left. But you know there are still a lot of landmines in the ground, on the routes into Kosovo, and in many of the communities. We are bringing in the best people in the world to take those mines up. Every year the United States does more than half that work all around the world. It is hard work; it is dangerous work. You have suffered enough. I don't want any child hurt. I don't want anyone else to lose a leg or an arm or a child because of a landmine.

So I ask you, please be patient with us. Give us a couple of more weeks to take the landmines up, if the people here ask you to do that, because you are going to be able to go back in safety and security. I want to make sure it is a happy return.